REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 7 have been rejected under §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,406,127 to Furui. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 as amended recites in pertinent part:

means for determining a collision based on an output signal from the acceleration sensor and a collision determination threshold value...

means for judging whether the output signal from the acceleration sensor is a normal signal or an abnormal signal based on a normal or abnormal threshold value...

Regarding the exemplary embodiment discussed in the specification, a normal/abnormal judging means (122, 123) determines whether a sensor output signal from an acceleration sensor (11, 21) is normal or abnormal. In addition, a collision determination means (128) determines whether a vehicle collision has occurred based on the normal/abnormal signal output from the acceleration sensor (11, 21) by canceling or processing the normal or abnormal sensor output signal. The normal/abnormal judging means and the collision determination means use respective threshold values. For example, as discussed on pages 12 and 13 of the specification and as shown in FIG. 2, the normal/abnormal judging means may use a threshold value ThDG set at approximately 30% of the maximum value of the main acceleration signal output value G(n). The collision determination means may use a threshold value that is relative to a maximum segment integration value. See page 3, lines 3-7 of the specification.

The Examiner asserts that a signal processing circuit 7 (comparator 7c) is both a collision determination means and a normal/abnormal judging means. However, the circuit 7 has

only one threshold (reference voltage 7d) used in conjunction with the collision determination means functionality. The circuit 7 does not determine whether an output signal S3 of an acceleration sensor 6 is normal or abnormal. Rather, a diagnosis circuit 5 runs diagnostics on the circuit 7 by applying an impact simulating signal S2 in place of the signal S3 to determine if the circuit 7 is operating normally (col. 3, lines 18-25). Therefore, in Furui, the circuit 7 operates to drive a squib 3 whenever the output signal S3 reaches the threshold of the comparator 7c, even if the output signal S3 is abnormal.

In view of the above lack of description in Furui of a normal/abnormal judging means as recited in claim 1, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejection of claim 1, as well as claim 2, which recites judgment means in a similar manner, and claim 7, which depends from claim 1, be withdrawn.

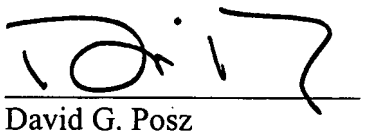
The Examiner has indicated that claims 3-6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The indication by the Examiner that these claims contain allowable subject matter is noted and appreciated. Claims 3-5 have been amended into independent form to include the limitations of original base claim 2, and the dependency of claim 6 on claim 5 has been maintained. Therefore, claims 3-6 are now in allowable form.

New claims 8-15 have been added. Claims 8-10 are method claims and are supported by the same portions of the specification and drawings that support claims 1-7 above. Claims 11-15 correspond to claim 7 and have been added to depend respectively from claims 2-6.

As all outstanding rejections have been addressed, Applicants assert that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that a Notice to that effect.

Although no additional fees are believed to be due, permission is given to charge any unanticipated fees to Deposit Account 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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